

# Live Well & Work Well

MARCH 2026

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## Build Healthy Habits With “Wellness Stacking”

Building healthy habits doesn't have to mean overhauling your entire lifestyle. In fact, small, meaningful changes are often the most sustainable. That's the idea behind wellness stacking, a method that helps you build better routines by pairing new habits with behaviors you already do every day.

By linking a new action to an existing routine, you create a simple structure that makes healthier choices easier and more automatic.

Wellness stacking works because your brain thrives on predictable patterns. Existing habits, such as brushing your teeth or making your morning coffee, act as “anchors.” When you attach a small wellness habit to one of these anchors, your brain begins to connect the two behaviors. Over time, the new habit requires less effort because it becomes part of an established routine. This reduces the mental load of having to remember to be healthy and makes consistency feel natural rather than forced.

Getting started with wellness stacking is simple. First, identify your daily anchor habits — the things you do without thinking. These might include waking up, sitting down at your desk, eating lunch or winding down at night. Next, choose a small wellness habit

that aligns with your goals, such as drinking a glass of water, stretching for one minute, taking a brief walk or practicing a few deep breaths. Attach the new habit to the existing one using a clear structure. Then, keep the new behavior small, easy, and repeatable to help it stick. Here are some examples of habit stacks:

- **After I wake up**, I will drink a full glass of water.
- **While my coffee brews**, I will do one minute of light stretching.
- **When I sit down at my desk**, I will take five deep breaths.
- **After lunch**, I will take a five-minute walk.
- **Before brushing my teeth at night**, I will write down one thing I'm grateful for.
- **After I turn off the TV**, I will prepare water or snacks for tomorrow.

By connecting tiny wellness habits to moments already built into your day, you can create sustainable changes. Reach out to a health care professional for further guidance.

To learn more about the new dietary guidelines, visit [realfood.gov](https://www.realfood.gov). Individuals should consult with their health care provider for personalized guidance.

# U.S. News & World Report Reveals Top 2026 Health Trends

This year, U.S. News & World Report (U.S. News) replaced its long-running Best Diets annual rankings with a Top Health and Nutrition Trends report. The findings reflect survey results from a panel of 58 experts, including doctors, dietitians and health researchers. The experts were asked which emerging health trends would have the greatest impact in 2026. Here are their top predictions:

## 1. Expanded Use of Glucagon-Like Peptide-1

**(GLP-1) Drugs:** About 1 in 5 adults have used GLP-1 medications, and usage rates are rising as costs decrease and pill versions of these formerly injectable drugs become available. GLP-1's popularity will grow as its use broadens beyond obesity and Type 2 diabetes, tackling other conditions.

## 2. Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and

**Wearable Technology:** Wearable tech can reveal simple health information, and can provide real-time information and personalized recommendations

when paired with AI. Many people are opting for smartwatches and smart rings that track metrics, such as physical activity, sleep and food.

**3. Greater Use of "Food as Medicine":** While this concept isn't necessarily new, it does recognize that the foods consumed directly impact health. Experts predict a return to the basics of whole, nutritious food this year.

While plant-based food, sustainable sources and meat alternatives used to dominate the U.S. News's diet rankings, those trends landed at the bottom of this new health report. Today's reality is that more people are focusing on ways to incorporate animal products they consider sustainable and ethical.

Consult your doctor for more information about these health trends or for guidance in setting your own health goals for the year.

## Understanding Kidney Health

March is National Kidney Month, making it a great time to take charge of your health by lowering your chances of developing kidney disease. Kidneys filter blood to remove waste products and excess water, creating urine. They also produce vital hormones that help create red blood cells, promote bone health and regulate blood pressure.

**The National Kidney Foundation reports that 1 in 3 adults are at risk for kidney disease.**

Kidney disease is the 9th leading cause of death in the United States. Today, 14% of adults are affected by kidney disease — and 90% of them don't know it. Most won't have symptoms unless their kidneys fail.

There are some physical signs of kidney disease, but most people attribute them to other conditions. Here are risk factors for kidney disease:

- Diabetes
- Family history of kidney disease
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Excess weight
- Smoking

Taking care of your kidneys is essential because they work continuously to keep your body healthy. Regular testing can help detect early signs of kidney issues, while limiting over-the-counter pain relievers reduces the risk of kidney damage. Healthy habits, such as daily exercise, plant-based protein and hydration, support kidney function and can help protect your kidneys for the long term. Contact your doctor for more information about kidney health and warning signs of kidney disease.

# Recipe of the Month



## Baked Salmon with Herbs and Lemon

Makes: 4 servings

### INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz. salmon (or any white fish)
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper
- ⅛ tsp. dried oregano
- ⅛ tsp. dried thyme
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 ½ Tbsp. margarine (melted)

### PREPARATIONS

1. If using frozen fish, thaw it in the refrigerator according to package directions.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Separate (or cut) the fish into four pieces. Place the fish in a 13x9-inch baking pan.
4. Combine the paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper, oregano and thyme in a small bowl.
5. Sprinkle the herb mixture and lemon juice evenly over the fish. Then, drizzle the melted margarine on top.
6. Bake until the fish flakes easily with a fork, about 20 to 25 minutes.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

(per serving)

Total calories	229
Total fat	15 g
Protein	21 g
Sodium	95 mg
Carbohydrate	1 g
Dietary fiber	0 g
Saturated fat	3 g
Total sugars	0 g

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Source: MyPlate